

CSR News Flash

February 25, 2010
Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Contact:
[Don Luckett](#)
CSR Press Office
301-435-1111

CSR Acts to Protect Reviewer Identity on Small Review Groups

CSR's practice of posting rosters of small Special Emphasis Panels (SEPs) online often made it easy for applicants to identify scientists who may have reviewed their applications. For some researchers serving on small SEPs, this situation could create a professional risk.

"The possibility that reviewers may be identified easily led us to act," said CSR Director Toni Scarpa. "We need to protect their identities." Doing so will also protect the integrity of peer review, because it will help ensure that reviewers don't shy away from being critical of applications submitted by leaders of their fields.

Rosters for all small SEPs in an Integrated Review Group (IRG) are now aggregated into a single IRG roster that dilutes the possibility of tying a reviewer to the review of a specific application. All SEPs that review 15 or fewer applications will be consolidated into an IRG's aggregated roster. Summary statements for applications reviewed in small SEPs will include a link to an aggregated IRG roster instead of the normally included meeting roster.

This practice will help ensure objective reviews, free of inappropriate influences so science can continue to advance and lead to much needed medical breakthroughs.

About CSR

CSR organizes the peer review groups that evaluate the majority of grant applications submitted to NIH. These groups include experienced and respected researchers from across the country and abroad. Since 1946, CSR's mission has been to see that NIH grant applications receive fair, independent, expert, and timely reviews — free from inappropriate influences — so NIH can fund the most promising research. CSR also receives all incoming applications and assigns them to the NIH institutes and centers that fund grants. For more information, go to CSR's Web site—<http://www.csr.nih.gov>—or phone 301-435-1111.

About NIH

NIH — the Nation's Medical Research Agency — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

Revised 3/25/2010